

The President's Radio Address

September 4, 2004

Good morning. America is the home to the most dedicated, innovative, and decent workers in the world. And thanks to their effort and enterprise, America's economy is strong and growing stronger.

This past week we learned that we added 144,000 new jobs in August and nearly 60,000 more jobs in June and July than previously estimated. Overall, we've added about 1.7 million new jobs since last August. And the unemployment rate has fallen to 5.4 percent, nearly a full point below the peak last summer and lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Our Nation is proud of all our workers, and on this Labor Day weekend, we say thank you.

The world is changing dramatically for American workers. The global market is expanding, creating new markets for our goods and new competition for our people. Workers are changing jobs more often, and they need new skills to stay ahead. This time of change can be a time of great opportunity for American workers, and Government must take their side.

To create more jobs in America, we must make sure that America remains the best place in the world to do business. That starts with encouraging investment and expansion by restraining Federal spending, reducing regulation, and making tax relief permanent. We also need to make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy, to expand trade, and to level the playing field for American goods and services across the globe. And we must protect workers and small-business owners from the frivolous lawsuits that threaten jobs across America.

Another drag on our economy is the Tax Code, which is a complicated mess filled with special interest loopholes and saddling our people with more than 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year. American workers and their families deserve a simpler, fairer, progrowth system, so I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

In this time of change, many workers want to go back to school to learn new or different skills, so we will double the number of people

served by our principal job training program and increase funding for our community colleges. We will change outdated labor laws to make the workplace more family-friendly and give workers more control over their schedules through comp-time and flex-time.

I also have a plan to create American opportunity zones to help communities that have lost manufacturing, textile, and other jobs. In these areas we'll provide tax relief, investment incentives, and regulatory relief specifically designed to attract new businesses and create new jobs. We will also improve housing, job training, and education in opportunity zones so these communities in transition have all the resources they need to succeed.

We'll also work to build an ownership society in America. Our Nation is stronger when more people own their homes, their own health plans, and a piece of their retirement. We will strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal account, a nest egg they can call their own and Government can never take away.

With all these proposals, we'll provide American workers with a path to greater opportunity, more freedom, and more control over their lives.

American workers built this country, and they continue to build our prosperity today. They have our gratitude and our confidence. And all Americans have my best wishes for a safe and enjoyable Labor Day weekend.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:25 p.m. on September 3 at the Crowne Plaza Five Seasons Hotel in Cedar Rapids, IA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Kirtland, Ohio

September 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Listen, there's nothing better than taking a Saturday

bus ride with your family—[*laughter*—especially in Ohio. Thanks for coming out today. It's great to be in Lake County. I appreciate so many people turning out. It looks like Lake County and Ohio is Bush-Cheney country.

I believe you got to get out with the people and ask for the vote, and that's what we're doing today. I'm here to ask for your vote, and I'm here to ask for your help.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is First Lady for 4 more years. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife. She is a terrific First Lady for the United States.

And I'm so proud of Barbara and Jenna. I really appreciate them coming out on the campaign trail with us today. Campaigning like this is kind of like going on the family camping trip—[*laughter*—I promised, but never took them on. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate my friend Steve LaTourette. He's a great United States Congressman. You need to put him back into office. And while you're putting me back in and putting him back in, put George Voinovich back in as well. I appreciate you being here, Senator. I also appreciate Senator Mike DeWine and his daughter Alice joining us today. Michael, thank you for coming. Congressman Ralph Regula from Ohio is on the bus trip with us today. Thanks for being here, Ralph.

I appreciate Mayor David Anderson coming today. Mr. Mayor, thank you for coming. Fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] I want to thank the Sonny Burgess Band for coming today.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I want to thank you for setting up such a fantastic rally. I appreciate your hard work. I appreciate what you've done and what you're going to do. I'm here to ask you to register your friends and neighbors to vote. We have a duty in this country to vote. Remind your citizens—your fellow citizens to do their duty. And when you're registering voters, register independents and discerning Democrats. You heard Zell Miller the other night. He represents a lot of folks who understand that with 4 more years, Dick Cheney

and I will make this country safer, stronger, and better.

We're approaching an historic national election, and the time for choosing is getting closer. I'm looking forward to campaigning in your State. You've got a great State full of great people. I'm looking forward to talking about the records we've built, the convictions we hold, and the vision that guides us forward. I fully understand a Presidential contest is a contest over the future. And so as I travel your State, I'll tell you where I stand, what I believe, and where I'll lead this country for the next 4 years.

I believe every child can learn and every school must teach. And that's why we passed the most important Federal election reform in history. We are challenging the soft bigotry of low expectations. We're raising standards. We're using accountability system to figure out who needs help early, before it's too late. We believe in local control of schools. We know reading is the new civil right. We're making progress in America. The achievement gap is closing, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our seniors with good health care. That's why I brought Republicans and Democrats together. Seniors now get immediate help buying medicine. Soon, every senior will be able to get prescription drug coverage, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovative spirit of America's workers, small-business owners, farmers, and ranchers, and that is why we unleashed that energy with the largest tax relief in a generation. Because we acted, our economy is growing. Yesterday we received the jobs report for August. It shows that our economy is strong and getting stronger. We added 144,000 new jobs last month, including 22,000 new jobs in manufacturing. We've added 1.7 million new jobs since last August, a year ago last August. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent. That is a full point below last summer. It is lower than the average rate of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. There's more work to be done here in the State of Ohio. I understand there's people looking for work and can't find a job. We will not rest until they do find a job.

We're making progress, and we're not turning back.

I believe the job of the President is to confront problems, not pass them on to future Presidents and future generations. I believe the most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This will not happen on my watch.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. I'm running with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy that Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. I believe this Nation wants steady, consistent, principled leadership. And that is why, with your help, we're going to carry Ohio and win a great national victory in November.

One of the things I talked about the other night in New York was how this world of ours is changing. People are changing jobs. Women are working not only inside the house but now outside of the house as well. It's a different world from the world of our parents and grandparents, yet most of the fundamental systems of our country haven't changed. The Tax Code, the health coverage, the pension plans, the worker training were created for the world of yesterday, not for tomorrow. We're going to transform these systems so that all citizens are equipped and prepared and thus truly free to make your own choices so you can pursue your dreams.

Any good plan starts with making sure people can find work. Any good plan makes sure that we expand hope and opportunity with a growing economy. To create more jobs in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. To create jobs in America, Congress must get my energy plan to my desk so we become less dependent on foreign sources of energy. To create more jobs in America, we must open up markets around the world for U.S. goods and services. We open up our markets—my message to other countries like China is, "You open up yours." We can compete with anybody, anywhere, anytime, so long as the rules are fair. To create more jobs in America, we must

get rid of these junk lawsuits that threaten our small-business owners. To create more jobs here, we've got to be wise about how we spend your money.

See, I believe Government can set priorities and fund those priorities and let you keep more of your own money. My philosophy says, "We're good at some things, but once we fund those things, you can spend your money far better than the Federal Government can."

In order to make sure this economy grows, we've got to keep your taxes low. And there we have a difference of opinion in this campaign. I'm running against a fellow who has already promised over \$2 trillion of new Federal programs if he's elected.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. That's a lot. That's a lot, even for a Senator from Massachusetts. So they asked him the other day, "How are you going to pay for it?" And he said that old line we've heard before, "Oh, don't worry, we'll pay for it by taxing the rich." We have heard that line before. First of all, you can't raise enough money to pay for all those programs by taxing the rich, and secondly, you know how it works. They get accountants and lawyers, and you get stuck with the bill. But we're not going to let him. We're going to carry Ohio and the country.

Thank you all for being here. I appreciate you coming.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Today, a little earlier, I talked about creating what's called American opportunity zones. These will help communities recovering from lost manufacturing, textile, and other jobs. For example, an area like greater Cleveland will be able to apply for tax relief and investment incentives and regulatory relief, specifically designed to attract new businesses and new jobs.

Another drag on our economy is the Federal Tax Code. Yes, that Tax Code is a complicated mess. It's filled with special interest loopholes. You realize it takes 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year to comply with the Tax Code. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify the Federal Tax Code.

In a new term, we'll help our workers by expanding access to community colleges so they can gain the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Let me tell you what else we need to do. In a time of change, most new jobs are filled by people with at least 2 years of college. That's the realities of the 21st century. Yet one in four of our students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants to low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college education.

In changing times, we've got to do more to make quality health care available and affordable. One-half of all the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. Small businesses are having trouble affording health care. So in a new term, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts that big companies get.

We're going to offer tax credits to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts. In a new term, I'll ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center. And to make sure we improve health care for you in Lake County, we've got to get rid of these frivolous lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine and running your docs out of practice. We've got a national problem when it comes to these frivolous lawsuits. I don't think you can be pro-doctor, pro-hospital, and pro-patient, and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to make a choice. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I made my choice. I'm for medical liability reform—now.

In changing times, there's nothing like owning something to bring stability to your life. We're going to continue to promote homeownership in America. The homeownership rate in our country is at an alltime high. Nothing better than knowing more people are opening the door to their house and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well if you're a younger worker, you better look at that Social Security system very seriously. Older guys like me are just fine when it comes to Social Security. But the fiscal solvency of Social Security is in doubt, if you're a younger worker. We'll strengthen Social Security by allowing younger workers to save some of their taxes in a personal savings account, an account they call their own, an account they can pass on from one generation to the next.

In this world of change, there are some things that do not change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. The institutions that bring us stability must not change, our families, religious congregations. They deserve our support. We stand for a culture of life in which every person matters and every person counts. We believe religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, and our Government must never discriminate against them. Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges. I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, 2001, we have fought the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens are at stake.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Our strategy is clear. We are defending the homeland. We're transforming our military. We're strengthening our intelligence services. We're staying on the offensive. We will strike the terrorists abroad so we do not have to face them here at home.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. We are working to advance liberty in the broader Middle East because freedom will bring hope and the peace we all want. By being resolute and strong, we will prevail.

Our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi Arabia was fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned its attacks. Because we acted, today, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorist leaders; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons programs; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been detained or killed. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions, and the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. Remember, he subsidized the families of suicide bombers. He harbored Abu Nidal and his organization. He let Zargawi run free in Baghdad, and his crowd. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that September the 11th requires our country to think differently. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

And so I went to the United States Congress. I saw a threat, and I said to the Congress, "Do you see a threat?" And members of both political parties looked at the same intelligence I looked at and came to the same conclusion we came to. And they authorized force, including my opponent. He looked at the same intelligence. He came to the same conclusion. And when they said on the Floor of Congress, "Do you vote to authorize the use of force," he said, "I do."

The last commitment of the Commander in Chief has got to be to put troops in combat. The first commitment has got to be to try to resolve problems diplomatically. And so I went to the United Nations. I said to that body, I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence we had looked at and again concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. They passed a resolution 15 to nothing that said, "Disclose, dis-

arm, or face serious consequences." The free world had spoken. But as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein ignored the demands of the free world. He wasn't about to listen to the collective voice of the world. As a matter of fact, he deceived inspectors that were sent into his country.

So I had a choice to make. It's the kind of choice that only comes to the Oval Office. It's the kind of decision no President would ask for but must be prepared to make. The decision was: Do I trust a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or defend our country? Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people have been liberated. Think about this, young women, young girls could not go to school in Afghanistan under the Taliban. Their mothers were whipped in the public squares. Yet, because we acted, we're not only more secure, but 10 million people have registered to vote for the upcoming Presidential election in October. Iraq has got a strong Prime Minister and National Council, and national elections are scheduled in January. The world is changing. Freedom is on the march.

We're standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word. We're also doing so because we're serving a historic cause that will make our country safer. See, free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies, which no longer feed resentment and breed violence for export. Free societies change people. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them. That helps us keep the peace.

Our mission in those countries are clear. We'll help new leaders train their army so they can do the hard work of defending themselves against a few who want to deny the hopes of the many. We will help those countries head toward elections. We will help them get on the path of stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

We've got a fabulous United States military full of decent, honorable, and courageous people. I want to thank the veterans

who are here for having set such a great example for those who wear the uniform.

I made a pledge to those who wear the uniform and their families, we'd give them all they need so they can do their job. And that's why I went to the Congress last September, proposed—and the Congress overwhelmingly passed—\$87 billion of funding needed for our troops for body armor and fuel, spare parts, ammunition, hazard pay, health benefits, all that's necessary to support them in their missions in Iraq and Afghanistan. And I was pleased that we received strong bipartisan support. As a matter of fact, it was so strong that only 12 United States Senators voted against the funding.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes. Two of them are my runningmate and his—my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him why, and he said, "Well, I actually did vote for the \$87 billion, before I voted against it." That's a—

Audience members. Flip-flop! Flip-flop! Flip-flop!

The President. I bet you they don't speak that way on the town square in the cities here in Lake County. They pressed him further, and he said he's proud of the vote. Then he just said, "The whole thing was a complicated matter." There's nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Over the next 4 years, we'll continue to work with our friends and allies in the cause of freedom and peace. There are nearly 40 nations involved in Afghanistan, some 30 nations involved in Iraq. I'm proud of their contributions. I appreciate working with the leaders of those countries for making us all more secure. But I will never turn over America's national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That's what I believe. I believe the wisest use of American strength is to advance

freedom. I've been spending time with Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. We sit at a table and discuss a lot of things, and one of the most important things we discuss is peace. Think about that. It wasn't all that long ago in the march of history that my dad and your dads or granddads were fighting Japan in a brutal war. They were our enemy. And here today, because my predecessor and others believed in the power of liberty to transform an enemy into an ally, because they stood strong in the face of the skeptics, because they believed that freedom is the deepest desire of every human heart, that Japan is a democracy and an ally. And here I am talking about the peace, talking about North Korea, how to make it work on the peaceful peninsula, talking about Iraq, talking about how to bring terrorists to justice. Some day an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq talking about the peace, and our children and grandchildren will be better off.

I believe millions in the Middle East plead in silence for their liberty. I believe that given a chance, they will embrace the most honorable form of government ever devised by man. I believe all these things, not because freedom is America's gift to the world but because freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman in this world.

I believe that the 21st century will be the century of liberty. By promoting freedom here at home and abroad, we will build a safer world and a more hopeful America. We'll spread ownership and opportunity to every corner of this land. We'll pass the enduring values on to another generation. We'll continue to lead the world in the cause of freedom and peace.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn't one of those times. This is a time when we need firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep abiding faith in the values that make this a great nation.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It's a day I will never forget. I'll never forget those workers in hardhats at the top of their lungs yelling at

me, "Whatever it takes." I remember shaking hands with people who just came out of the rubble, the firefighters and the police who set such an incredibly powerful example for bravery and courage and compassion all across the country. The guy looked me in the eye, and he said, "Do not let me down." And since that day, I wake up thinking about how better to protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

Four years ago, when I traveled your great State and asked for the vote, I made a pledge. I pledged that if you honored me with this great responsibility, I would uphold the dignity and the honor of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thanks for coming. God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at noon at Lake Farmpark. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor David E. Anderson of Willoughby, OH; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the Republican National Convention; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks in Erie, Pennsylvania September 4, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for being here. I appreciate you all coming out. There's nothing better than taking a bus trip on a Saturday with your family. [Laughter] Nothing better than ending the bus trip in Erie, Pennsylvania.

I'm so honored so many came out to say hello. Thank you. I'm here to ask for the vote. I believe it's important to get out amongst the people, tell them what's on your mind. And that's what I'm here to do. But perhaps—I'm going to give you some reasons to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura is the First Lady for 4 more years. Laura is a great mom, a great wife, and a great First Lady. I'm proud of the job she's doing. I'm also proud of our daughters, Barbara and Jenna. Thank you for coming.

I'm proud of my runningmate too. I'm running with a good man in Dick Cheney. I admit he's not the prettiest face on the ticket. [Laughter] I didn't pick him for his looks. I picked him because of his sound judgment, his experience. I picked him because he can get the job done.

It's good to be in old Tom Ridge's hometown. He's a good friend. He's a good man, and he's doing a heck of a good job in reorganizing the Department of Homeland Security. Thank you for raising him the right way. [Laughter]

Glad to be here with Senator Arlen Specter. I hope you put him back in the United States Senate. He's a good friend. I'm looking forward to working with him just like I look forward to working with Rick Santorum, the other Senator.

I'm proud to be in the district of another friend, Phil English, Congressman Phil English. Thought he'd have got a better seat. [Laughter] And Congressman John Peterson is with us as well. Thank you for coming, John. I appreciate you being here.

Jean Craige Pepper too—she's running for treasurer of the State of Pennsylvania. My friend Jane Earll is with us today from right here in Erie. John Evans is with us.

I want to thank all the other State and local officials who are here. Thanks for serving your State and your community. I thank my friend John Connolly, the country music singer, for being here today. I appreciate him coming. Most of all, thank you all for taking time out of your Saturday to come by and say hello. I appreciate you being here. It means an awful lot. Somebody said, "Well, maybe a couple hundred will show up to say hi." [Laughter]

I'm here also to ask for your help. I know many of you are involved in grassroots politics, which means putting up the signs or making the phone calls. I want to thank you for that, and I want to thank you for what you're going to do as we come down the stretch run here. I urge you to encourage your friends and neighbors to vote. We have a duty in this country to participate in the democratic process, to register people, convince people that we have an obligation in a free society to exercise our will at the ballot box. And when you're registering people,